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Moldavia between Hungary and Poland, 1347–1412

DENNIS DELETANT

THE history of Moldavia, from her emergence as a feudal state in the middle of the fourteenth century to her affirmation as a formidable military and political force under Stephen the Great (1457–1504), was determined by her relations with two powerful neighbours, the kingdoms of Hungary and Poland. In this paper I propose to show how the conflict and convergence of Hungarian and Polish policy dominated the affairs of the Moldavian princes in the infancy of the principality, and circumscribed their area for manoeuvre in the pursuit of their interests.

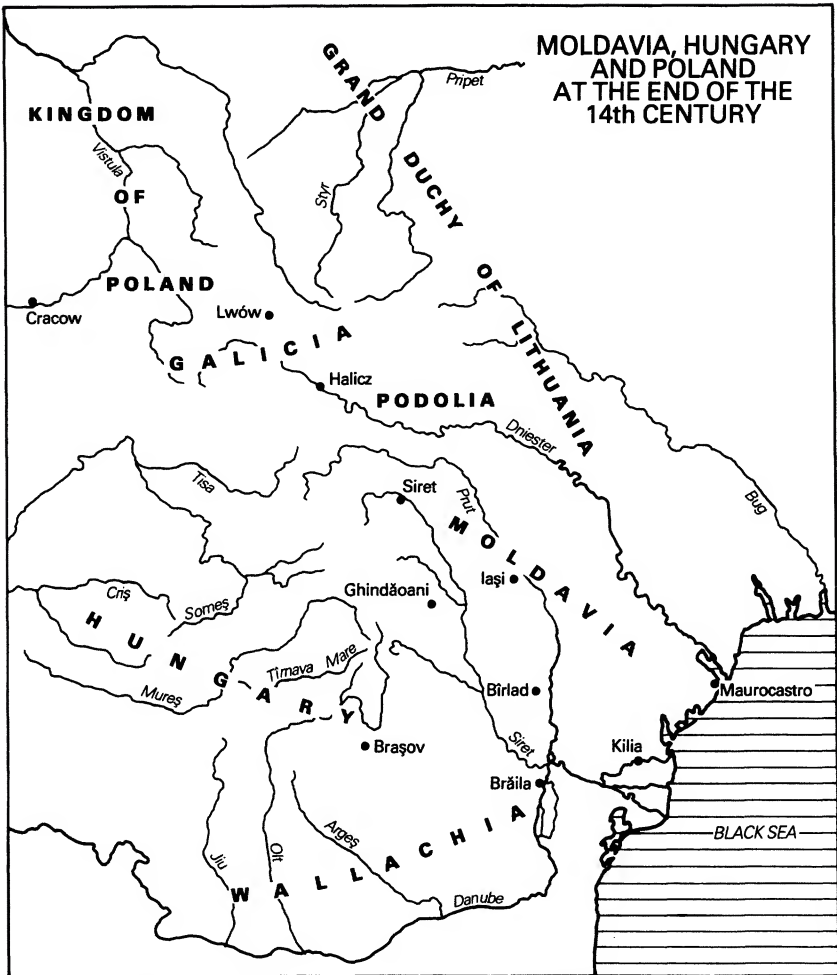
Moldavia owed her birth to the successful efforts of Louis of Hungary (1342–82) to extend his authority east of the Carpathians at the expense of the Tatars whose demise in this area, following the death of the Khan Uzbek in 1342, removed an obstacle to the emergence of a second Rumanian principality alongside her sister Wallachia to the south-west. The defeat of the Tatars in Szekel land, east of the Carpathians, by a Hungarian expedition in 1345 prompted Louis to request the Pope to sanction the revival of the diocese of Milcovia,¹ the former bishopric of the Cumans that had fallen victim to the Tatar invasion of 1241.² This action of Louis lends support to the belief that he established, within a short time, a ‘corridor’ under Hungarian control³ that extended from the Carpathians to the mouth of the Danube and included this diocese. Confirmation of the existence of such a corridor and its approximate boundaries is offered by a diploma granted by Louis in June 1358 to the merchants of Kronstadt (Braşov) by which he gave them authority to cross the area bounded by the rivers Prahova and Buzău

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¹ This see carried jurisdiction over part of what was to become Moldavia and Wallachia, the river Milcov being the boundary between the two later principalities.

² On 27 March 1347 Pope Clement VI authorized the archbishop of Kalocsa to consecrate as bishop of Milcovia the Franciscan monk Thomas de Nympti: see E. de Hurmuzaki, *Documente privitoare la istoria românilor I*, part 2. 1346–1450, ed. by N. Densuşianu, Bucharest, 1890, no. IV, pp. 4–5.

³ This idea, first suggested by Nicolae Iorga in his *Istoria românilor*, III, Bucharest, 1937, p. 161, was developed by E. C. Lăzărescu in his unpublished doctoral thesis *Români, Unguri şi Tătari în vremea întemeierii domniilor româneşti. Contribuţiuni de istorie universală la problema românească în sec. XIII şi XIV*, defended at Bucharest in 1946.



in the west, and the confluence of the Ialomiţa and the Danube, and of the Siret and the Danube, in the east. Related to the revival of the Milcovia diocese, and the establishment of a trade corridor, is the creation by Louis in 1347 of a Hungarian fiefdom in the same region under a figure called Dragoş.⁴ It is to the settlement of Dragoş's fiefdom around the river Moldova that the emergence of Moldavia can be traced. Dragoş ruled for about seven years and was succeeded by his son Sas, but c. 1363 Bogdan, a former voievode of Maramureş in northern Transylvania, whom Louis described as unfaithful to

⁴ Şt S. Gorovei, 'Îndreptări cronologice la istoria Moldovei din veacul al XIV-lea' (*Anuarul Institutului de istorie şi arheologie 'A. D. Xenopol'*, x (1973), Iaşi, p. 119).

him,⁵ withdrew surreptitiously to Moldavia and brought down Sas after a bloody struggle. A royal diploma of Louis, dated 2 February 1365, tells us not only of these events, but also of the award to Balç, son of Sas, of Bogdan's estate in Maramureş which had been confiscated by the King.⁶ In spite of several attempts on the part of Louis to remove Bogdan by force of arms, the latter survived to rule until 1367, delivering by his defiance a blow to Louis's prestige and a claim to the title of first prince, or voievode, of Moldavia.

Bogdan's emergence as voievode implies the removal of a Hungarian suzerainty over the new principality, a situation that, according to some scholars, persisted until 26 September 1387 when Petru I paid homage at Lwow to the King of Poland, thus making Moldavia a vassal to the Polish crown.⁷ It has been argued, however, that for much, if not all, of the period from Bogdan's death in 1367 until 1387 Moldavia reverted to, and remained under, Hungarian suzerainty, and under dual Polish–Hungarian suzerainty between 1370 and 1382 when the two kingdoms were united;⁸ this in spite of the absence of any record of an oath of fealty being sworn by a Moldavian voievode to the King of Hungary. The principal evidence adduced in support of continued Hungarian suzerainty over Moldavia is the following: a passage in the chronicle of John of Küküllő which states that the voievodes appointed by the Romanians of Moldavia considered themselves vassals of the Hungarian King;⁹ an assurance given by Charles IV of Luxemburg, King of Bohemia (1346–78), to Louis I of Anjou, King of Hungary (1342–82), in

⁵ In a document bearing the date 21 October 1343; see *Documenta historiam valachorum in Hungaria illustrantia*, ed. by E. Lukinich and L. Gáldi, Budapest, 1941, pp. 99–103.

⁶ *Documenta Romaniae Historica. D. Relații între țările române, I (1222–1456)*, Bucharest, 1977, no. 43, pp. 80–81.

⁷ The debate over Moldavia's status between 1367 and 1387 is admirably surveyed in Ștefan Gorovei's excellent paper 'Poziția internațională a Moldovei în a doua jumătate a veacului al XIV-lea' (*Anuarul Institutului de istorie și arheologie 'A. D. Xenopol'*, xvi (1979), Iași, pp. 187–219), and renewed in a later contribution 'Armoires et rapports politiques: le "cas" moldave au XVe siècle' (*Revue roumaine d'histoire*, xxiii (1984), no. 2, Bucharest, pp. 126–28).

⁸ E.g. C. Cihodaru, 'Tradiția letopisețelor și informația documentară despre luptele politice din Moldova în a doua jumătate a secolului al XIV-lea' (*Anuarul Institutului de istorie și arheologie 'A. D. Xenopol'*, v (1968), Iași, p. 15): 'Moldova, după moartea lui Bogdan I, a reluat vechile legături cu Ungaria și . . . dominii ei s-au considerat cel puțin pînă la moartea lui Ludovic de Anjou, vasali ai regelui maghiar. 'Moldavia, after the death of Bogdan I, resumed its old contacts with Hungary and . . . her princes considered themselves, at least until the death of Louis I, vassals of the Hungarian king'.

⁹ *Scriptores rerum hungaricarum*, ed. by J. Schwandtner, I, Vindobonae, 1766, ch. 49, p. 317: 'Wayvode vero, qui per Olachos ipsius regni eliguntur, se esse vasallos regis Hungariae profitentur ad homagium praestandum obligantur cum censu persolvere consueto.'

which Moldavia is mentioned as a vassal state of Hungary,¹⁰ and the accounts in some Polish chronicles that when Petru I paid homage to King Władisław II at Lwow, he renounced beforehand Hungarian suzerainty.¹¹ In order to consider the merits of these arguments, it is necessary to examine the relationship between the two principal powers in the region during the period under review, 1367 to 1387. From such an examination it will emerge that the balance of power between Poland and Hungary changed significantly; until 1370 they were independent kingdoms, from this latter date until 1382 they were united under a single monarch, and from 1382 onwards their particular interests brought them into competition with each other.

The diploma of 2 February 1365 in favour of Balç constitutes an admission by Louis of the loss of Moldavia to the Hungarian crown. There is nothing to suggest that, after Bogdan's death in 1367, Hungarian suzerainty was restored. The passage from John of Küküllő quoted above,¹² the only source that might support such a hypothesis, is inconclusive since it does not assign a date to the period referred to.¹³ This is not to deny that Bogdan's rule of Moldavia was constantly challenged by Louis who pressed his attack on both the political and religious fronts. After Louis became King of Poland in 1370 as a result of the dynastic agreement concluded in 1339 by Charles Robert of Hungary with Casimir the Great, and renewed by Louis in 1355,¹⁴ Moldavia was exposed to even greater Hungarian pressure which could now be exerted from the north, since Casimir bequeathed to his successor not only the

¹⁰ *Monumenta historica Boemiae nusquam antehac edita*, ed. by G. Dobner, II, Prague, 1768, no. LXV, pp. 386–87. The preamble to the agreement reads: Reversales Caroli IV. Imp. et Boemiae Regis, quibus nomine suo filiorum, fratris et nepotis per juramentum in manus Patriarchae Alexandrini emissum assecurationem dat Ludovico Regi Hungariae, quod nunquam aspirare, vendicare aut usurpare velit Regna Hungariae, Poloniae, Dalmatiae et cetera. dd. Wratislaviae [Breslau our note] die 14. Martii Anno 1372 (id., p. 386). See also J. Sýkora, 'Poziția internațională a Moldovei în timpul lui Iațcu: luptă pentru independență și afirmare pe plan extern' (*Revista de istorie*, 29 (1976), no. 8, Bucharest, pp. 1135–51) who, on p. 1135, mistakenly quotes the following passage as being from the act: Imperator promittit Ludovico securitatem de regnis eius Hungaria, Polonia et woewodatu Moldavia non inuadentis ac vindicantis.

¹¹ Ș. Papacostea, 'La Fondation de la Valachie et de la Moldavie et les Roumains de Transylvanie: une nouvelle source' (*Revue roumaine d'histoire*, XVII (1978), no. 3, p. 395 note 18).

¹² See note 9.

¹³ As J. Sýkora, op. cit., p. 1145 points out, John of Küküllő makes a further undated reference to the Moldavians' relations with Louis which contradicts his claim that they were vassals of the Hungarian crown. John states that Louis was engaged almost annually in campaigns against his enemies and rebels, especially against the Serbs and Moldavians (Item fere singulis annis vel in quolibet anno movit exercitum contra aemulos et rebelles, et saepius contra Rachenos et Moldavos, omnimodam diligentiam adhibendo . . . *Scriptores rerum hungaricarum*, I, ch. 39, p. 193).

¹⁴ Paul W. Knoll, *The Rise of the Polish monarchy. Piast Poland in East Central Europe, 1320–1370*, Chicago, 1972, p. 200.

kingdom of Poland, but also Galicia¹⁵ which he had finally conquered in 1366. This conquest brought Poland to the very borders of Moldavia and its acquisition by Louis meant that, strategically, Moldavia was held in a Hungarian pincer. It is not without significance that Petru I of Moldavia paid homage to Władisław in 1387 after Galicia was restored to the Polish crown.

To these political considerations must be linked the confessional pressure that was exerted upon Moldavia by both Hungary and Poland. The proselytizing zeal of the Holy See in 'schismatic' lands on the eastern and southern confines of both kingdoms was transmitted by Franciscan and Dominican missionaries who were organized in regional groups and carried out their missionary work in neighbouring Orthodox lands from Hungary and Poland. As early as 1340 two Franciscan martyrs, Blasius and Marius, are attested at Siret in northern Moldavia.¹⁶ In 1345 the Franciscans in Galicia are believed to have constituted a new vicariate there, Vicaria Russiae, and in 1360 Casimir requested the Pope to place eight new Franciscan monasteries in Galicia under the jurisdiction of the Franciscan province of Bohemia and Poland.¹⁷

The repercussions of this increased Franciscan missionary activity in Galicia were not without their echo to the south in Moldavia where, at the beginning of 1370 the voievode Lațcu, son and successor to Bogdan, sent a letter to Pope Urban V in which he expressed a desire to accept the Catholic faith and to receive directly from the Holy Father the nomination of a Catholic bishop to Siret, his capital.¹⁸ While the advance of Catholicism in Galicia, where there was also an Orthodox see which claimed jurisdiction over Moldavia, no doubt played a part in Lațcu's request, his action was largely determined by political considerations, as is clear from the channel through which he submitted his request to the Pope. Lațcu addressed himself not to the Catholic prelates in Hungary but to the Pope himself. His contact with the latter was made through two

¹⁵ Also referred to in various languages as Halicz, Halicz-Vladimir, Červenorusskij, Rus' czerwona and Rotrussland.

¹⁶ G. Moisescu, *Catolicismul în Moldova până la sfârșitul veacului XV*, Bucharest, 1942, p. 87, note 2: Hoc eodem anno [1340] in Valachia et civitate Sereth, frater Blasius una cum fratre Marco martyrii coronam fortiter adipiscebantur, ibidem sepulti XV Iunii. See also *Annales Minorum seu Trium Ordinum a S. Francisco Institutorum*, ed. L. Waddingus, vii, Quarachii, 1932, p. 287.

¹⁷ J. Sýkora, op. cit., p. 1144.

¹⁸ E. de Hurmuzaki, op. cit., p. 160 and J. Sýkora, op. cit., p. 1142, note 21: . . . nobisque idem dux Latzko humiliter supplicavit, quod oppidum suum Ceretense Halecensis diocesis, spacio magno terrarum diffuse, cui preest Episcopus scismaticus, cuius ecclesia Halecensis est in Russiae partibus, scismaticorum videlicet, constituta, utique insigne ac incolarum multitudine copiosum et alias aptum decorari insignibus civitatis, in civitatem erigere ac civitatis insignire vocabulo, et eidem Episcopum preficere catholicum. This passage also shows that Siret was in the Orthodox diocese of Galicia.

Franciscans of Polish origin, Nicholas Melsak and Paul of Swidnica, to whom he entrusted his letter. In this way Lațcu bypassed the Hungarian crown and church, and thus avoided being entirely at the discretion of his powerful neighbour Louis who, later in that same year (November 1370), on Casimir's death, was to accede to the Polish throne. Lațcu, by attempting to remove from his acceptance of Catholicism any political taint, was seeking to preserve Moldavia's newly-won independence.

That the Pope recognized the subtlety of Lațcu's request is evident from his decision to create a see at Siret and to place it under the direct jurisdiction of the Holy See.¹⁹ After charging the Archbishop of Prague, Jan Očko of Vlašim, and the Bishops of Wrocław and Cracow, respectively Przeclaw of Pogorzela and Florian Mokrski²⁰ to report on the state of affairs in Moldavia, the Pope instructed the Bishop of Cracow in 1371 to consecrate the first Catholic bishop of Siret in the person of a Polish Franciscan, Andrei Jastrzębiec.²¹ Even though Lațcu's acceptance of Catholicism is recorded in a letter of the Pope,²² it remains an isolated gesture in the actions of the Moldavian princes and had little impact upon the inhabitants of the principality. Lațcu's wife Ana and daughter Anastasia remained Orthodox, and he himself was buried in 1375 not in the Catholic cathedral in Siret, but in the Orthodox church built by his father at Rădăuți.

We now come to the second argument adduced in favour of continued Hungarian suzerainty over Moldavia: the recognition by Charles of Bohemia of Louis's right to Moldavia. Following hostilities between Louis I of Hungary and Charles IV of Luxemburg, King of Bohemia, each monarch sought to secure from the other a promise that he would respect his possessions. The first undertaking in this sense was an act issued by Charles on 14 March 1372 at Wrocław (Breslau) in which he guaranteed that he, his family and heirs:

nunquam aspirare debemus, nec volumus ad vendicandum, aut usurpandum nobis vel ipsis aut alicui ex nobis Ungariae, Poloniae,

¹⁹ E. de Hurmuzaki, op. cit., p. 161 and J. Sýkora, op. cit., p. 1143, note 24: dictum oppidum Ceretense ac totam predictam terram seu ducatum Moldaviensem ab omni potestate, dominio, superioritate et iurisdictione ordinaria et diocesana et subiectione episcopali prefati episcopi Halecensis seu gerentis se pro episcopo Halecensi, ac ecclesie Halecensis et cuiuslibet alterius persone ecclesiastice, in ipsius oppido et terra seu ducatu quaecumque spirituales seu ecclesiasticas potestates, sive iurisdictionem se pretendenti habere; et eius ecclesie seu dignitatis, totaliter in perpetuum eximatis et etiam liberetis, constituentes et ordinantes, quod solum et immediate S. Sedi apostolice in spiritualibus subsit . . .

²⁰ Prelates of the Franciscan province of Bohemia and Poland.

²¹ J. Sýkora, op. cit., p. 1144.

²² C. C. Giurescu, *Istoria românilor*, I, Bucharest, 1938, pp. 397–98.

Dalmatiae etc. Regna, et signanter specificè et expresse eorundem Regnorum et coronarum Principes Ecclesiasticos, seu seculares, Principatus seu Ducatus, et nominatim Waywodatus Muldawiae etc. seu alios eorum quosunque Principatus, Ducatus, terras, homines, dominia, civitates, castra, seu quaslibet pertinentias eorum communiter vel divisim in genere seu in specie sive in Ungaria, Polonia, Dalmatia vel aliis Regnis praedictis seu alias ubicunque locorum consistant.²³

Charles thus recognized Louis's rights and possessions in a number of lands including the principality of Moldavia. However, what is interesting in the act of Charles is the distinction drawn between Hungary, Poland and Dalmatia on the one hand, and other territories with a different status (*signanter specificè et expresse eorundem Regnorum et coronarum Principes Ecclesiasticos, seu seculares, Principatus seu Ducatus*), namely the principality of Moldavia (*et nominatim Waywodatus Muldawiae*). It appears that Charles, at the request of Louis, was giving an especial assurance in the case of Moldavia, just as Louis was to reciprocate in the case of Charles's possessions in Moravia, Silesia and elsewhere.²⁴ Can this assurance be considered evidence of Louis's suzerainty over Moldavia or is it open to a different interpretation?

Lațcu's initiative in requesting in 1370 the creation of a Catholic bishopric at Siret by avoiding Hungarian channels demonstrates clearly an independence of action that is inconsistent with Hungarian suzerainty. It is more probable that the assurance given by Charles over Moldavia is a reflection of Louis's concern at Lațcu's action; Louis wished to ensure that Moldavia did not fall into the sphere of influence of a rival such as Charles.²⁵ To suggest, however, that Charles and Lațcu had concluded an alliance against Louis is pure speculation.²⁶

²³ *Monumenta historica Boemiae nusquam antehac edita*, ed. G. Dobner, II, Prague, 1768, no. LXV, p. 387 and J. Sýkora, *op. cit.*, p. 1150. Louis, in his turn, issued a similar act in respect of Charles's possessions at Visegrád in the same year.

²⁴ J. Sýkora, *op. cit.*, p. 1139, note 11.

²⁵ The growth of Luxemburg power in Central Europe threatened the balance of power there and drove Casimir of Poland into alliance with Louis I against Charles. On 14 February 1369 Louis and Casimir agreed in Buda to come to each other's aid against an attack by Charles and, in case of war, not to sign a separate treaty with him nor to enter into a marriage pact with the Luxemburg family. When Charles learned of the formation of this coalition against him, he turned to the Pope in Avignon who offered to mediate. When mediation failed, Charles attempted to arrange a marriage pact to break the coalition. He first suggested that his son Václav should marry Louis's niece Elizabeth. When Louis refused, Charles approached Casimir with a proposal that Václav should marry one of the Polish king's daughters. Such a marriage would also give Václav right of succession in Poland. This attempt also failed.

²⁶ As proposed by J. Sýkora, *op. cit.*, p. 1149: 'The possibility of an anti-Angevin alliance between Charles and Lațcu cannot be ruled out; otherwise why would Louis have asked Charles to give a promise not to usurp Moldavia from him?'. The rivalry between the two kings is sufficient explanation for Louis's desire to have his claim to Moldavia recognized by Charles.

The accession of Louis of Hungary to the throne of Poland on Casimir's death in November 1370 placed Moldavia in an even more exposed position. To the north and west it was bounded by lands under the rule of Louis, and even though Lațcu had succeeded in demonstrating a measure of independence in the management of his intrests, room for manoeuvre was severely restricted. Under Petru I (c. 1377–91) a further factor was added to the equation of power in the region — the grand principality of Lithuania.²⁷

This principality had emerged in the basins of the rivers Neman, Viliya, and Shventoy in the first part of the thirteenth century from a union of Lithuanian tribes under Mendovg (Mindaugas in Lithuanian). Pressure from the German knights of the Teutonic and Livonian Orders in the west and north caused the Lithuanians to extend southwards and eastwards under Mendovg, but it was during the following century that the greatest expansion took place. Under Gedymis (Gediminas) (c. 1275–1341) and Olgerd (Algirdas) (1345–77) Lithuanian influence encompassed White Russia and the Ukraine, from Vitebsk in the north to eastern Podolia in the south, and from Volhynia in the west to the region of Kiev in the east. Lithuanian power is even considered by some scholars to have extended to the Black Sea steppes between the Dniester and the Dnieper by the second half of the fourteenth century, but the evidence for this is fragmentary and far from conclusive.²⁸

²⁷ The reign of Petru I (c. 1377–91) in Moldavia provides what was seen by some scholars as further evidence of Hungarian suzerainty over Moldavia, namely the striking of coins bearing arms similar to those of the House of Anjou: see G. Brătianu, 'În jurul originii stemelor principatelor române' (*Revista istorică română*, 1 (1931), Bucharest, pp. 233–37). In fact, the arms in question are those of Bogdan I who, as voievode of Maramureș and vassal of the Hungarian King Charles Robert of Anjou (1310–42), modelled his arms on those of his suzerain: see M. Berza, 'Stema Moldovei în timpul lui Ștefan cel Mare' (*Studii și cercetări de istoria artei*, 11 (1955), 1–2, Bucharest, p. 87). These arms were retained by Bogdan's successors, irrespective of their relations with the Hungarian crown (Șt Gorovei, 'Poziția internațională . . .' pp. 199–200).

²⁸ The argument that Lithuanian domination extended to the Black Sea steppes rests largely on the consequences of the battle of Siniye Vody (The Blue Waters) in 1362 or 1363. According to the Lithuanian–Ruthenian chronicle 'When Grand Prince Olgerd was Lord of the Ruthenian land, he went into the steppes with the Lithuanian army and at the Blue Waters defeated the Tatars, who included three brothers, Chaczibeg, Kotlobug and Demetrius. These three brothers were heirs of the land of Podolia. From them the collectors [of the Tatars] took tribute' (see Paul W. Knoll, op. cit., p. 246). Most scholars identify the Blue Waters with Sinjucha, a tributary of the river Bug, but there is disagreement over the consequences of Olgerd's victory. In two recently published studies of the battle, St M. Kuczyński, 'Sine Wody', *Studia z dziejów Europy wschodniej X–XVIII w.*, Warsaw, 1965, pp. 175–77 and R. Batura, *Lietuva tautų kovoję prieš Aukso Ordą. Nuo Batu antplūdžio iki mūšio prie Mėlynujų Vandenių* [Lithuania in the popular struggle against the Golden Horde. From the invasion of Batu's hordes to the battle of Siniye Vody], Vilnius, 1975, pp. 271–82, the Polish historian claims that Olgerd's victory was an isolated one and that it did not lead to Lithuanian domination of the Black Sea coast between the Dniester and the Dnieper at the expense of the Tatars, while Batura's argument is quite the reverse.

The same may be said about the character of Moldavia's relations with Lithuania after the death of Lațcu. Much of what has been written about these relations is based on conjecture or inferred from the paucity of information concerning links between the two principalities,²⁹ the most controversial issue being the postulated interlude of the reign in Moldavia of the Lithuanian prince of Podolia, Jurg Korjat.

Jurg Korjat was one of three brothers who, according to the Lithuanian-Ruthenian chronicle, established their rule in Podolia with Lithuanian support.³⁰ Recent research has shown that there is little reason to believe that the Korjat brothers entered Podolia until after the battle of Siniye Vody in 1363 and that, although Jurg and Alexander Korjat became King Casimir of Poland's vassals in Galacia in 1366, they did not accept at the same time Polish suzerainty over Podolia which they ruled as independent Lithuanian princes.³¹ Whether this situation changed with Louis's accession to the Polish throne is not clear. It has recently been claimed that the Korjat family became vassals of Louis in 1377³² and if this was so, it could explain Jurg's death at the hands of Moldavian boyars a short time afterwards.

The events that followed Lațcu's death are amongst the most obscure in Moldavia's history. It is between his death c. 1374 and the accession of Petru I about 1377 that the reign of Jurg Korjat has been placed. The basis for this episode in Moldavian history is a passage

²⁹ See, for example the otherwise excellent article of C. Racoviță, 'Începuturile suzeranității polone asupra Moldovei (1387-1432)' (*Revista istorică română*, x (1940), Bucharest, pp. 237-332). The author states boldly that in the period before 1387 Lithuania, 'preoccupied in the east', was not an important consideration in Moldavia's relations with her neighbours (p. 312). Yet he goes on to assert that both Lithuania and Poland coveted the port of Maurocastro, on Moldavia's border, and that 'up to 1386 Lithuania held the upper hand' (p. 316).

³⁰ 'The brother of the Grand Prince Olgierd of Lithuania, Michael Korjat, had four sons: George [Jurg], Alexander, Constantine, and Theodore. Three of them, with the permission of Olgierd and with the help of the Lithuanians, were to set up rule in Podolia' (see Polnoye sobraniye russkikh letopisey, vol. 17, St Petersburg, 1907, vols 82, 99 and Paul W. Knoll, op. cit., p. 246).

³¹ Paul W. Knoll, op. cit., pp. 247-48.

³² It is tempting to speculate on the nature of the documents found in Poland by the late Jan Sýkora which purport to show that the Korjat family became vassals of Louis in 1377: see J. Sýkora, 'Călătorie de documentare în R. P. Polonă' (*Revista de istorie*, 28 (1975), no. 2, Bucharest, p. 270). In this same respect see Ș. Papacostea, 'La Fondation de la Valachie et la Moldavie et les roumains de Transylvanie: une nouvelle source' (*Revue roumaine d'histoire*, xvii (1978), no. 3, Bucharest, p. 395): 'En Moldavie, après la fin, au cours de la même année [1377 our note], du règne de Juri Koriatowicz, prince Lituanien de Podolie, instrument de la politique angevine que la pays n'accepta pas, le pouvoir échut à Pierre Mușat, dont le règne commença sous les auspices de l'hégémonie hongroise restaurée'. Whilst admitting the first part of Papacostea's admirably phrased statement on this confusing period of Moldavian history, it is difficult to accept that Petru's reign 'began under restored Hungarian hegemony' if the very reason for his predecessor's rejection by the Moldavians had been that 'he was an instrument of Angevin policy'.

in a Lithuanian chronicle of the fifteenth century: And the Wallachians [i.e. Moldavians, our note] took prince Jurg as their voievode, and there they poisoned him.³³ Where and when these events took place are, unfortunately, not mentioned. Yet a deed of 3 June 1374, drawn up in Bîrlad in Moldavia in Slavonic, has been adduced as further evidence of Korjat's rule in Moldavia.³⁴ The document records that:

The Lithuanian prince Jurg Korjat, hospodar of the whole of Moldavia, awarded to his faithful [subject] Pan Iacşa Litavor, his representative in Bielograd [Maurocastro], the village of Zubrăuţi for his courage in the battle against the Tatars at Vladiciu on the Dniester. Redacted in Bîrlad, 3 June 1374, by the scribe Iaţcu.³⁵

This deed was published by B. P. Haşdeu in 1860³⁶ from the original that his father, Alexandru Haşdeu, was said to have discovered in the Swidzinski library in Kiev. However, since Nicolae Iorga implied that the original could not be found in this library,³⁷ there has been controversy over the authenticity of this deed.³⁸ None of the arguments against its authenticity are convincing. P. P. Panaitescu attempted to discredit the testimony of a Polish traveller to Korjat's reign and thereby 'prove' that the deed was false,³⁹ while Ştefan Gorovei is content to accept Panaitescu's case. Iorga based his argument on the fact that Jurg in the deed is styled 'Lithuanian prince and hospodar of the whole of Moldavia' when the title 'hospodar of the whole of Moldavia' is first used in the Moldavian chancery during the reign of Alexander the Good (1400–32).⁴⁰ Iorga also maintained that Iacşa Litavor could not have been Jurg's representative in Maurocastro since the port was in the hands of the Genoese. To meet these objections it has been pointed out that in Jurg's document the chancery practice of Lithuania might be reflected, since Jurg's brother was styled 'Prince and hospodar of Podolia'.⁴¹ We can also

³³ See the Uvarov MS in *Polnoye sobraniye russkikh letopisey*, vol. 17, St Petersburg, 1907, col. 100: а кнѣзю Юрья Волохове возма к собе его воеводу, и тамо его шкормили and in *Polnoye sobraniye russkikh letopisey*, vol. 35, Moscow, 1980, p. 74. The translation of шкормили as 'poisoned' is discussed by A. V. Boldur, 'Die Herrschaft des litauischen Fürsten Jurij Korjat in der Moldau (1374–1379)' (*Südost-Forschungen*, xxxii (1973), Munich, p. 11).

³⁴ See A. V. Boldur, *op. cit.*, pp. 20–22.

³⁵ M. Costăchescu, *Documentele moldovenesti înainte de Ştefan cel Mare*, 1, Iaşi, 1931, pp. 1–4. This deed, if genuine, indicates that Moldavia (or possibly Lithuania, since Korjat was a Lithuanian prince) exercised some form of authority in Maurocastro at this date.

³⁶ In the journal *Foaia de istorie şi literatură*, 2, Iaşi, 1860, p. 41.

³⁷ N. Iorga, *Istoria românilor*, III, Bucharest, 1937, p. 255.

³⁸ P. P. Panaitescu, N. Iorga and Şt Gorovei are among those who question its authenticity while G. Popovici, I. Bogdan and M. Costăchescu consider it to be genuine; see also A. V. Boldur, *op. cit.*, p. 20.

³⁹ Şt S. Gorovei, *Dragoş şi Bogdan*, Bucharest, 1973, p. 142.

⁴⁰ N. Iorga, *op. cit.*, pp. 255–56.

⁴¹ A. V. Boldur, *op. cit.*, p. 21.

counter Iorga's argument by stating that, while the Genoese had established a trading station at Maurocastro, the port was not a colony like Caffa; indeed, there is evidence that part of the region between the Danube delta and the mouth of the Bug, including Maurocastro, was subject to Tatar authority in 1368.⁴² The fact that Iacșa is mentioned as Jurg's representative in Maurocastro would allow us to bring forward the date when some authority over the port might have passed to the ruler of Moldavia.

The paucity of information about Korjat's rule in Moldavia is compounded by our ignorance of the exact date of Lațcu's death, and by the absence of reliable witness to the accession of Petru I.⁴³ Some scholars have even argued that for a brief period before Petru's accession, his mother, Margaret, ruled in his name,⁴⁴ offering as proof a letter of Pope Gregory XI, dated 28 January 1378, in which he addresses her as 'Margarita de Cereth, Domina Valachiae Minoris'.⁴⁵ The use of *domina* 'lady' befits her status as mother of the prince⁴⁶ and does not imply that she was 'ruling princess' of Moldavia. The very year of Korjat's demise in Moldavia is disputed.⁴⁷ Nevertheless, a connection with this latter event is seen by many scholars in an entry in the annals of the Teutonic Knights for the year 1377 which reads:

Item ante festum Nativitatis Christi Lituani processerunt contra illos de Valachia⁴⁸ et ibi fuerunt victi, ita quod paucos equos abduxerunt.⁴⁹

⁴² A diploma issued by Louis I of Hungary on 22 June 1368 exempts the merchants of 'Domini Demetry Principis Tartarorum' from paying duty on their goods when travelling to Hungary in return for the same concessions being given to Saxon merchants from Kronstadt (Brașov) 'in terra ipsius domini Demetry': see E. de Hurmuzaki, *Documente privitoare la Istoria Românilor*, 1, part 2. 1346-1450, ed. by N. Densușianu, Bucharest, 1890, p. 144.

⁴³ The first document attesting Petru's reign in Moldavia is a privilege in Latin bearing his signature dated 1 May 1384: see M. Costăchescu, op. cit., pp. 4-6. This privilege, issued in favour of the Dominican church in Siret founded by Petru's mother Margaret, was signed 'in villa Horleganoio' which the most recent editors of the document have identified with Horlăcenii: see *Documenta Romaniae Historica. A. Moldova, I (1384-1448)*, ed. by C. Cihodaru, I. Caproșu and L. Șimanschi, Bucharest, 1975, p. 2.

⁴⁴ G. Popovici, 'Anul de la martie în Moldova în timpul lui Alexandru cel Bun' (*Convorbiri literare*, 39 (1905), Bucharest, p. 206).

⁴⁵ Quoted from Șt S. Gorovei, *Dragoș și Bogdan*, Bucharest, 1973, pp. 149-50.

⁴⁶ Note also the phrase 'illustis et nobilissima domina Margarita, mater nostra dilecta et honorabilis' in the privilege of 1 May 1384, at which date her son Petru was voievode of Moldavia: see M. Costăchescu, op. cit., p. 4.

⁴⁷ A. Boldur, op. cit., p. 29 postulates the year 1379. Șt Gorovei, 'Poziția internațională . . .', p. 206 gives Boldur's thesis short shrift without offering any supporting arguments, while Ș. Papacostea, 'La Fondation . . .', p. 395 implies that Lațcu's reign ended in 1377 and that Jurg's reign consequently began in that year.

⁴⁸ Moldavia was often referred to as Valachia minor and Wallachia as Valachia magna in Latin documents of this period.

⁴⁹ *Scriptores rerum Prussicarum: Die Geschichtsquellen der preussischen Vorzeit bis zum Untergange der Ordensherrschaft*, ed. by T. Hirsch, M. Topper, and E. Strehlke, III, Leipzig, 1866, pp. 106-07. I. Minea, *Principatele române și politica orientală a împăratului Sigismund*, Bucharest, 1919, p. 36 associates the above passage with an unsuccessful attempt by Jurg to occupy the throne of Moldavia.

'Likewise, the Lithuanians moved against those in Moldavia before Christmas and were defeated there. For this reason they brought back few horses.'

The purpose of this unsuccessful expedition to Moldavia is not given. It has been interpreted by some as punishment for the murder of Korjat by the Moldavians.⁵⁰ That Moldavia was passing through a period of upheaval is purported to be shown by a document of 10 November 1377 in which Władisław, Duke of Opele (Ladislas von Oppeln), granted two villages to Giurgiu, a Rumanian noble, who had been forced to seek refuge in a foreign land because of the unexpected treachery of his people (*propter defectum gentis urgentem*).⁵¹ It is significant that this Giurgiu, who was probably a Moldavian noble who had fallen foul of Petru I, should have been assisted by Władisław who had been appointed by Louis governor of Galicia in 1372. It is not stretching coincidence too far to suggest that there is a connection between the death of Korjat, the exile of Giurgiu, and the Lithuanian expedition to Moldavia. An explanation is that Jurg Korjat was murdered by Moldavian nobles as a result of internal strife which was perhaps caused by Korjat's act of allegiance to Louis in 1377; that Giurgiu fled to Galicia to escape this conflict; and that the Lithuanian expedition was a reprisal for Korjat's death.

The Lithuanian expedition to Moldavia in 1377 must also be seen in the context of developments on Moldavia's northern border in 1376 and 1377. In 1376 a Lithuanian army under Kiejstut and Lubart, the sons of Gedymin, entered Galicia and laid it waste. Władisław of Opele summoned his master's aid and in July 1377 Louis himself, at the head of a Polish-Hungarian force, crossed into Lithuania which was now rent by internal strife following the death in the same year of the Grand Prince Olgierd. The campaign conducted by Louis resulted in the annexation of the territories of Chełm and Bełz to Galicia, and in the succession of Jogaila (c. 1351–1434) to the throne of Lithuania while still in his twenties. This upheaval in Lithuania would have offered the Moldavian boyars an opportunity to rid themselves of Korjat. Yet was the Lithuanian expedition to Moldavia connected with Korjat's demise? While it is unlikely that the expedition took place during the period of Lithuanian hostilities with Louis, it could have occurred shortly before or after. If before, and if Jurg Korjat became a vassal of Louis

⁵⁰ As suggested by G. Popovici, *op. cit.*, pp. 205–10 and Șt Gorovei, 'Poziția internațională . . .', pp. 205–09.

⁵¹ P. P. Panaitescu, 'Din istoria luptei pentru independența Moldovei în veacul al XIV-lea. Primele lupte pentru independența ale țărilor române' (*Studii*, ix (1956), no. 4, p. 113).

in 1377, then the expedition could hardly have been an act of reprisal for Korjat's murder since the Lithuanian princes, Kiejstut and Liubart, by ravaging Galicia in the previous year, had placed themselves in a state of war with Louis and would be unlikely to avenge the death of Louis's vassal. The annals of the Teutonic Knights indicate that the expedition took place not long before Christmas 1377; there would have been good reason for a Lithuanian expedition after the accession of Jogaila for the latter had gained his throne as a result of Louis's intervention and it would have been natural for him to take reprisals against the Moldavian boyars for their murder of a fellow Lithuanian prince, one who may also have been a vassal of Louis.

After the brief period of Jurg Korjat's reign in Moldavia between 1374 and 1377, the title of voievode of Moldavia passed to Petru I, known also as Petru Mușat. In the absence of any evidence to the contrary, and with the acceptance of the argument that Korjat's act of allegiance to Louis in 1377 provoked his death, there is little justification for claiming that Petru's reign began under 'the auspices of restored Hungarian suzerainty'.⁵² Unfortunately, the paucity of documents for the early period of Petru's reign leads us once again into the realm of speculation and inference. Since the first document attesting to the rule of Petru dates from as late as 1384, there is even uncertainty as to the year of his accession. Be that as it may, the death of Louis in 1382 signalled a shift in relations between Poland and Hungary on the one hand, and between Moldavia and each of these kingdoms on the other.

Louis died without being able to ensure the Angevin succession, leaving only two daughters, both minors: Maria aged eleven, and Hedwig aged eight. Maria was betrothed to Sigismund of Luxemburg, Prince of Brandenburg, and her nomination by Louis as regent was unacceptable to most of the Polish nobles. Sigismund pressed his claim with the support of one party of Polish nobles by undertaking an unsuccessful expedition to Poland in 1383; a second faction of nobles opted for the Piast, Ziemowit of Mazovia. A third group proposed as a compromise Maria's younger sister Hedwig, who was betrothed to Wilhelm von Habsburg. At a gathering of nobles at Sieradz at the end of 1383, it was decided to offer the crown to Hedwig on condition that the union with Hungary was abandoned.⁵³ The young princess accepted and was crowned as Queen Jadwiga of Poland in Cracow in October 1384. The nobles then addressed themselves to the problem of Jadwiga's consort. Having

⁵² As Șerban Papacostea does in 'La Fondation . . .', p. 395.

⁵³ Norman Davies, *God's Playground. A History of Poland, I: The Origins to 1795*, Oxford, 1981, p. 112.

rejected Maria on the grounds that she was betrothed to Sigismund, it was hardly surprising that they were equally ill-disposed towards Jadwiga's fiancé, Wilhelm von Habsburg, Prince of Austria. A more tempting proposition was offered by Jogaila of Lithuania.

Jogaila had his own problems as Grand Prince of Lithuania. The encroachment of two Catholic powers in the areas of Lithuanian interest appeared inexorable. To the north-west, the Teutonic Knights, under their Grand Master Winrich von Kniprode (1352–82), had defeated the Lithuanians at Rudau in 1370 and were using the licence, granted by the Pope in 1339, to convert them. To the west, the kingdom of Poland had been consolidated under Casimir, while under Louis Galicia was administered by the Hungarian crown. The internal divisions in Poland pursuant upon Louis's death, and the absence of a male heir, persuaded Jogaila to propose a solution to the Polish nobles that would be in the interests of both parties: a conjugal and political union. On 14 August 1385 an agreement was signed at Krewo between Jogaila and the nobles by which the Lithuanian prince, in return for the hand of Jadwiga, agreed to be baptized, to convert his pagan subjects to Roman Catholicism, and to join the Grand Principality of Lithuania with the Kingdom of Poland in a union. As a consequence of this agreement, an assembly of Polish nobles at Lublin proclaimed Jogaila, whom they called Jagiełło, their king in February 1386. On 15 February Jogaila was christened Władisław, accepted into the Roman Catholic Church, and henceforth known as Władisław Jagiełło. He married Jadwiga a few days later on the annulment of her engagement to Wilhelm.

The question of the female succession on Louis's death also divided the Hungarians. Although one party crowned Maria, another crowned her cousin Charles of Durazzo, only to see him murdered a month later. Until Maria's husband, Sigismund of Luxemburg, was crowned as her consort in 1387, Hungary passed through a period of virtual anarchy from which Poland took full advantage. Galicia still belonged to the Hungarian crown, as a result of the agreement of 1350 between Casimir of Poland and Louis of Hungary by which the province was bound to Poland only through a personal union during Casimir's lifetime; after the latter's death, Galicia was to pass to Hungary, either by inheritance or by purchase.⁵⁴ Galicia, on the death of Louis, was governed in Maria's name by Władisław of Opele but the weakness of the Hungarian crown prompted the Polish nobles to persuade Jadwiga to sanction

⁵⁴ G. Rhode, *Die Ostgrenze Polens, Politische Entwicklung, Kulturelle Bedeutung und geistige Auswirkung. I: Im Mittelalter bis zum Jahr 1401*, Cologne and Graz, 1955, p. 195.

an expedition for the reconquest of the province. The campaign was a swift success since Władisław had insufficient forces to put into the field, and the only point of resistance was the fortress of Halicz. Reinforcements provided by Władisław Jagiełło in the form of a Lithuanian detachment caused the surrender of the fortress on 11 August 1387. In the following month Jagiełło visited the new province of his kingdom, stopping at Lwow, and there, on 26 September 1387, Petru I of Moldavia paid homage and swore an oath of fealty to the Polish crown, to King Władisław and to Queen Jadwiga.⁵⁵

Much ink has been consumed in the search for an explanation of this act of Petru which marked a new departure in Moldavia's relations with her northern neighbour. Certainly, the union of Poland and Lithuania, and the expansion of the Polish kingdom at the expense of the Hungarian crown in Galacia, indicated to Petru I that Poland's star was now in the ascendant. Behind his acceptance of Polish suzerainty lay two important considerations. Recognition of Polish suzerainty was a guarantee both against Polish aggression towards Moldavia, and of Polish assistance in the event of a conflict with Hungary. For Jagiełło's part, the institution of suzerainty over Moldavia would frustrate any Hungarian attempt to reimpose its authority over the principality and, at the same time, would assure the Polish crown of control over one of the principal European trade routes which linked Flanders and Germany with the Black Sea via Cracow and Lwow⁵⁶ since Moldavia constituted the principal area of access to the Black Sea port of Maurocastro.

The opening of a trade route to the Black Sea for merchants coming from Poland dates from the first half of the fourteenth century. The privileges granted by the princes of Lwow and Halicz to the Teutonic Knights and to merchants from the German towns show that before the annexation of these two principalities by Poland, they formed part of a trade route descending from northern Europe. In its continuation south-eastwards via Podolia to the Crimea, where it issued at the Genose colony of Caffa, this route was known as 'the Tatar route'. However, the security and vitality of the southern part of the route could not be secured by Poland for it was

⁵⁵ The Latin text of the oath is to be found in M. Costăchescu, *Documentele moldovenești înainte de Ștefan cel Mare*, II, Iași, 1932, pp. 599-601 where the date 6 May is given. The correct date appears to be 26 September: see Gh. Duzinchevici, 'O rectificare' (*Revista istorică română*, III (1933), Bucharest, p. 385). Petru swore the oath before the Orthodox metropolitan of Kiev, Ciprian, a fact which confirms Petru's religious affiliation. The basic study of Moldavia's vassalage to Poland is C. Racoviță, 'Începuturile suzeranității polone asupra Moldovei (1387-1432)' (*Revista istorică română*, X (1940), Bucharest, pp. 237-332).

⁵⁶ P. P. Panaitescu, 'La Route commerciale de Pologne à la Mer Noire au Moyen Âge' (*Revista istorică română*, III (1933), fasc. II-III, Bucharest, pp. 172-93).

only in 1387, as we have seen, that the Galician section was brought under Poland's wing. Already in 1382 we find an alternative branch mentioned, the 'Moldavian route', which offered a shorter journey from Lwow to Maurocastro in which the Genoese had established a trading colony, but whose hinterland was soon to be under the authority of Moldavia.⁵⁷ The commercial interest that the Polish king had in safeguarding the trade route from Lwow, which had been granted the right of *dépôt* (emporium) in November 1380, to Maurocastro was shared by the Moldavian voievode. The revenues from customs duties were a major source of income for the Moldavian treasury and explain, in part, the resilient resistance offered to the Turks during the later part of the fifteenth century by the principality which drew on the wealth of its towns. By making Moldavia his vassal, Jagiełło could hope to give protection for his own, and foreign, merchants as far as the Black Sea, and ensure the vitality of the important commercial centre of Lwow.

The new link forged between Moldavia and Poland served, then, the interests of both parties: for Poland it brought Moldavia firmly into her own sphere of influence at the expense of Hungary, while for Moldavia's part the principality was assured protection against Hungarian designs.⁵⁸ Not surprisingly, the institution of Polish suzerainty over Moldavia, coupled with Jagiełło's conquest of Galicia, were sources of great irritation to the new king of Hungary, Sigismund, who, in the year of his coronation as Maria's consort, witnessed this dual blow to the authority of the Hungarian crown. Sigismund's policy towards Poland was dictated by his desire to reaffirm Hungarian interests east of the Carpathians, a policy in which he made little progress before the close of the century. The

⁵⁷ A Genoese source of 1386, by mentioning the embassy of two Genoese emissaries to Maurocastro 'ambaxiatores euntes Constantino et Petro vayvoda', indicates that the Moldavian voievodes Petru I and Costea (c. 1377–90) exercised authority in the region around Maurocastro: see Ș Papacostea, 'Aux débuts de l'état moldave. Considérations en marge d'une nouvelle source' (*Revue roumaine d'histoire*, xii (1973), no. 1, Bucharest, pp. 141–42).

⁵⁸ Cf. Șt Ștefănescu's forecast: 'Les recherches qui seront entreprises à l'avenir révéleront peut-être que le lien établi en 1387 entre la Pologne et la Moldavie aurait été le résultat de la convergence de ces deux intérêts fondamentaux, ce qui explique d'ailleurs sa remarquable durabilité': see 'L'histoire de la Pologne et des relations roumano-polonaises dans l'historiographie roumaine d'après le 23 août 1944' (*Revue roumaine d'histoire*, xii (1973), no. 4, Bucharest, p. 649). Șt Gorovei's argument that the initiative to swear the oath of fealty to Władysław must have come from Petru is difficult to accept. He claims that the act of homage itself of 1387 demonstrates this since it is recorded that the decision to accept Polish suzerainty was taken 'with the full knowledge and free will of our faithful boyars, assembled in a special council' (Pozitia internațională . . . p. 216). This is mere supposition. It is hardly surprising that a special council was summoned to discuss the act of fealty which represented a watershed in Moldavia's relations with Poland, but whether Władysław requested Petru to pay homage, or Petru had already decided to do so, remains unclear.

bond between Moldavia and Poland was strengthened by marriage when Petru became Władisław's brother-in-law in 1388,⁵⁹ and the latter's concern to maintain these firm ties is illustrated by the introduction, in the promise of fealty given on 5 January 1393 at Suceava by Petru's brother and successor Roman (*c.* 1391-94), of a clause which excluded the swearing of an oath to another suzerain, clearly a reference to Sigismund. Roman undertook 'to be faithful and not to seek or to accept another ruler, but to serve and to assist the king, his wife and children, and the Polish crown . . .'.⁶⁰ The obligations of the Moldavian ruler were extended further when Ștefan (1394-99) succeeded Roman. The latter had assisted Theodor Korjat (Theodore Koriatovici, Koriatowicz), a member of the celebrated Lithuanian family, in his conflict with Witold (Vitovt), Grand Prince of Lithuania and cousin of Władisław, over the right to possessions in Podolia. After the defeat of the joint forces of Theodor and Roman by those of Witold at Kamieniec in 1394, Theodor fled and Roman was arrested on Władisław's orders. He was taken to Poland and imprisoned, and in his stead Władisław installed another member of Petru's family, Ștefan.⁶¹ Honouring an obligation that he assumed when promising to swear the oath of allegiance in 1395,⁶² Ștefan despatched a Moldavian contingent to assist Władisław in his conflict with the Teutonic Knights⁶³ during the period 1395-96. Indeed, Ștefan himself may have perished in the defeat of the Polish and Lithuanian nobles on the Vorksla by the Tatars in the summer of 1399, for there is no further mention of him. He was succeeded as voievode by a certain Iuga but it is doubtful whether this ephemeral figure had the opportunity to pledge his allegiance to Władisław. Virtually nothing is known about his person, his deeds, or his death. Only a handful of documents bears his signature as voievode, and it is even doubtful whether his rule lasted a full year.⁶⁴ In spite of Witold's efforts, on Iuga's demise, to install as voievode Petru's son Ivașco, who on 25 March 1400 swore an oath of allegiance to Władisław at Brześć (Brest), the throne was

⁵⁹ C. Racoviță, *op. cit.*, p. 330.

⁶⁰ M. Costăchescu, *Documentele moldovenești . . .*, II, pp. 607-08 and Ș. Papacostea, 'De la Colomeea la Codrul Cosminului. Poziția internațională a Moldovei la sfârșitul secolului al XV-lea' (*Romanoslavica*, XVII (1970), Bucharest, p. 526).

⁶¹ The Slavonic chronicles of Moldavia describe Ștefan as the brother of Petru and Roman: see *Croniclele slavo-române din sec. XV-XVI publicate de Ion Bogdan*, ed. by P. P. Panaitescu, Bucharest, 1959, p. 6, l. 10, while some Romanian historians consider him to be Petru's nephew: see Șt. Gorovei, *Dragoș și Bogdan*, p. 151.

⁶² C. Racoviță, *op. cit.*, p. 282: '[We undertake] to assist him [Władisław] with all our power against all enemies'.

⁶³ P. P. Panaitescu, 'Lupta comună a Moldovei și Poloniei împotriva cavalerilor teutoni' (*Romanoslavica*, IV (1960), p. 227).

⁶⁴ Constantin C. Giurescu, *Istoria românilor*, I, Bucharest, 1938, pp. 454-56.

occupied by Alexandru, son of Roman, who had the support of the voievode of Wallachia, Mircea cel Bătrîn (Mircea the Old).⁶⁵ By contrast to his predecessor Iuga, Alexandru was to preside, from 1400 to 1432, over one of the most notable periods of Moldavia's history. It has been said of him that he found a principality of clay and left one of stone.⁶⁶ Alexandru is only the second voievode, after Petru, that we know to have pledged his allegiance in person to Władisław⁶⁷ by swearing an oath of fealty before him at Kamieniec on 1 August 1404.⁶⁸ Alexandru promised to assist his suzerain against all enemies, without exception, and it was in fulfilment of this obligation that he sent a Moldavian force to participate in Władisław's decisive battle against the Teutonic knights near the village of Grünwald in Prussia on 15 July 1410.⁶⁹

The early years of Alexandru's reign witnessed a consolidation of relations between not only Moldavia and Poland, but also between Mircea, voievode of Wallachia, and the Polish crown. Again, it was fear of Hungarian intentions that prompted this development. In 1403 Mircea renewed a treaty of alliance that he had agreed with Władisław in 1389⁷⁰ by which both sides undertook to come to each other's aid if attacked by Sigismund.⁷¹ As a consequence of these political ties, commercial relations were extended. In 1408 Alexandru granted the merchants of Lwow the right of passage through Moldavia, indicating the scale of customs tariffs payable on goods exported from Moldavia.⁷² In the following year Mircea issued a similar privilege in favour of merchants from Poland and Lithuania in respect of Wallachia.⁷³ Despite these links between Poland and the two Romanian principalities, Sigismund persisted in his attempts to reduce Poland's sphere of influence east of the Carpathian arc, and even to restore Hungarian authority over Moldavia. The means employed to realize his aims ranged from military action to a diplomatic solution. In February 1395 Sigismund's forces

⁶⁵ Letopiseșul anonim al Moldovei [The Anonymous Chronicle of Moldavia] in *Cronicile slavo-române din sec. XV–XVI* . . . , p. 6, ll. 13–14.

⁶⁶ Șt S. Gorovei, *Dragoș și Bogdan*, p. 153.

⁶⁷ Both Roman and Ștefan had given written promises to swear an oath of fealty to Władisław but, as far as is known, they did not personally pay homage to him: see C. Racoviță, *op. cit.*, p. 266.

⁶⁸ M. Costăchescu, *Documentele moldovenesti* . . . II, pp. 625–27.

⁶⁹ Șt Ștefănescu, 'Participarea românilor la lupta de la Grünwald (15 iulie 1410)' (*Studii*, xiv (1961), no. 1, Bucharest, pp. 15–19). Almost half of the 27,000 Teutonic Knights that participated in the battle were slain, including the Grand Master, Ulrich von Jungingen, and 14,000 prisoners were taken for ransom: see N. Davies, *op. cit.*, p. 122.

⁷⁰ E. de Hurmuzaki, *Documente privitoare la Istoria românilor*, I, part 2 . . . , pp. 315–16.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 824.

⁷² M. Costăchescu, *op. cit.*, pp. 635–36.

⁷³ E. Katuzniacki, 'Dokumenta moldawskie i mułtanskie z archiwum miasta Lwowa' in *Akta Grodzkie i Ziemske*, VII, Lwow, 1878, pp. 22–23.

entered the principality but were thrown back by Ștefan's army at Ghindăoani in the district of Neamțu.⁷⁴ This setback led Sigismund to seek other avenues to pursue his policy; one such path was afforded by the persistent friction between Poland and the Teutonic Order which offered the perfect vehicle for Sigismund's ambitions. The disputes between the two powers — over the legalities of land settlements, and over the seizure by the Grand Master of the Neumark of Brandenburg in 1402 and of Samogitia two years later — were coming to a head. On the eve of the battle of Grünwald, Sigismund concluded an agreement with the Teutonic Order at Marienburg on 31 March 1410, the terms of which included recognition by the Order of Sigismund's claim to Moldavia.⁷⁵ In the eventuality of a victory over Władisław, and of the conquest of Moldavia, the Order undertook to hand the principality over to Sigismund. Unfortunately for the latter, the crushing defeat sustained by the Order at Grünwald shattered the Hungarian king's hopes, and left Władisław supreme east of the Carpathians. If Sigismund wished to press Hungarian claims in the area, there was no alternative but to negotiate.

Yet what interest would Władisław have in negotiating with Sigismund? In spite of his victory at Grünwald, Władisław was unable to capitalize upon it. Significant divergencies began to emerge between the king and his cousin Witold, which owed their origin to the so-called 'Wilno-Radom' agreement that was concluded on 18 January 1401. During Jadwiga's lifetime Władisław was King of Poland by virtue of being her consort while still preserving the title to the Duchy of Lithuania; on his wife's death in 1399 Władisław secured his position on the throne by marrying Anna of Cilli, who was of Polish royal blood, and was thus prepared to renounce his claim to the Duchy of Lithuania in favour of Witold. Meeting in their separate camps at Radom and Wilno, the Polish and Lithuanian nobles agreed that Witold should rule Lithuania for life, after which the Duchy should revert to Władisław and his successors. If Władisław were to have no heirs, the future of both Poland and Lithuania was to be decided by common assent. Witold

⁷⁴ Constantin C. Giurescu, op. cit., p. 451.

⁷⁵ In Sigismund's eyes Galicia, Podolia, and Moldavia had been 'alienated or occupied or usurped' by Władisław and the kingdom of Poland as is evident from the text of the agreement (*terrae Russie, Podolie et Moldavie, que vulgari nomine minor Walachia nominatur, vel alie infidelium terre aut bona ab ipso regno Hungarie alienata aut per dictum regem ac regnum Polonie occupata et usurpata . . .*): see *Monumenta Medii Aevi historica res gestas Poloniae illustrantia: Pomniki dziejowe wieków średnich do objaśnienia rzeczy polskich służące*, xii: Codex epistolaris saeculi decimiquinti, II, Cracow, 1891, pp. 35–36. For his part, Władisław had made it known at Jedlno that he wished to renew the agreements made with Mircea, voivode of Wallachia, whom he described as 'amico nostro sincere nobis dilecto': see Șt Ștefănescu, 'Lupta de la Grünwald', p. 16.

was now assured of a certain measure of independence in the conduct of his affairs, which he sought to use to his own advantage. Although he fought alongside his cousin at Grünwald, in the aftermath of the battle and of its implications for Sigismund of Hungary he sought to play off the two kings against each other. For Władisław there was the spectre of Sigismund coming to the aid of the Teutonic Knights upon the basis of the treaty of March 1410 in an effort to restore their fortunes after the débâcle at Grünwald. What Władisław wished to avoid at all costs was the possibility of a war on two fronts, and it was to this end that he concluded defensive agreements with Sigismund's enemies, Venice, the archdukes Ernest and Friedrich of Austria, Wallachia and Moldavia.⁷⁶ The treaties between Władisław on the one hand, and Alexandru of Moldavia and Mircea of Wallachia on the other, were concluded respectively on 25 May⁷⁷ and 17 May 1411.⁷⁸

In these circumstances a negotiated agreement with Sigismund would allay Władisław's fears, and would help to guarantee the durability of the peace treaty concluded with the Teutonic Order on 1 February 1411 at Toruń (Thorn), by which the existing frontiers between Poland and the Order were confirmed. However, a major stumbling block to such an understanding proved to be the status of Moldavia. During preliminary negotiations to the drafting of a Polish–Hungarian treaty that were held in the autumn of 1411 between representatives of the two kings in the town of Bartfeld (Bartfa, Bardejov) in Slovakia,⁷⁹ one of the Hungarian representatives addressed a letter to Władisław complaining of the changed position of the Polish negotiator over the question of Moldavia. From this letter, dating from the second half of November 1411, it is clear that the Polish stance compromised, in Hungarian eyes, the success of the discussions. The following passage from the letter reveals what had been agreed between the Hungarian representative and his Polish counterpart by the name of Johannes (John):

Postea vero in Barthfa cum eodem Johanne conveniendo secrete inter me et ipsum condixeramus mutuo super articulis et presertim de recuperatione possessionis realis terre Moldwane vestro auxilio concurrente ad obedienciam eiusdem domini mei regis et s. corone Hungarie reducende, et ut cetera omnia super quibus diferencia utrimque fiebat et versabatur, tam diu donec prefatus dominus meus rex et vos in humanis ageretur, deberent in suo statu inviolabiter et inconcusse remanere, et ita firmatum erat conclusive inter me et ipsum Johannem, certificans me

⁷⁶ F. Constantiniu and Ș. Papacostea, 'Tratatul de la Lublau (15 martie 1412) și situația internațională a Moldovei la începutul veacului al XV-lea' (*Studii*, 17 (1964), no. 5, p. 1130).

⁷⁷ M. Costăchescu, op. cit., pp. 637–39.

⁷⁸ E. de Hurmuzaki, *Documente* . . . , I, part 2, pp. 472–73.

⁷⁹ These discussions have been highlighted by F. Constantiniu and Ș. Papacostea, op. cit., pp. 1132–33.

idem Johannes hoc apud vestram serenitatem efficere, et ego apud regiam maiestatem cum fratribus meis modo simili deducere ad effectum dolo absque omni. Et utique, in quantum ex placiditate verborum considerandum erat, sperabam ad meam ad fratrum meorum inductionem bonum et commodum pacis alterutrum zelanciam prefatam domini mei serenitatem fuisse benevole acclamatum.⁸⁰

Having secured John's approval of an article in the treaty which would provide for the reimposition, with Polish assistance, of Hungarian suzerainty over Moldavia (et presertim de recuperacione possessionis realis terre Moldwane vestro auxilio concurrente ad obedienciam eiusdem domini mei regis et s. corone Hungarie reducende), the Hungarian representative then recounts John's revocation of their understanding and his own king's consequent displeasure towards himself:

Sed pridem circa festum s. Martini convenientibus consulariis vestris ac me e consulariis domini mei regis fuit parlamentum prius inter me et praefatum Johannem deductum in medium propositum et omnino alteratum et refutatum, propter quod dominus meus rex in magnam contra me displicenciam movetur, imputans michi vehementer, ut quasi fuerit per me sue serenitati in hoc minus iuste suggestum.

The letter ends with a warning that failure to resolve the litigious issues between the two kings could lead to war:

Dignetur igitur vestra serenitas pensare, si liceat violare conducta, que sic sub sinceritati boni propositi per me et, ut credidi, per ipsum Johannem conducta fuere, debeat delusorie confutari, et ne pericula in christianitate propter negocia incumbencia multiplicari contigat, taliter dementi bonitate disponere secundum ordinem premissorum, uti vigeat bonum pacis et tranquillitatis regnis utrisque et dissensionum discrimina supprimantur, nec insurgat aliqua scintilla gwerram paritura.⁸¹

It thus emerges from this letter that the most important issue, in Hungarian eyes, upon which an understanding had been reached, was the recognition by the Polish representative of Sigismund's claims to suzerainty over Moldavia; the Hungarian representative had even secured an undertaking from his Polish counterpart that Władisław would assist in the realization of these pretensions. Władisław's refusal to accept these terms is hardly a matter for surprise; what is puzzling is that his representative should have felt able to gratuitously concede Moldavia. While Władisław was anxious to come to an understanding with Sigismund, he clearly felt

⁸⁰ H. Heimpal, 'Aus der Kanzlei Kaiser Sigismunds (Über den Cod. Pal. 701 der Vatikanischen Bibliothek)' (*Archiv für Urkundenforschung*, ed. by K. Brandt and A. Hessel, xii (1932), Berlin–Leipzig, pp. 137–38), and F. Constantiniu and Ș. Papacostea, op. cit., p. 1132 where there are a small number of misprints in the Latin text.

⁸¹ Ibid., p. 138.

that the loss of Moldavia to his rival was too great a price to pay. The frustration of Sigismund is reflected in his representative's forecast that the dissension between the two kings could produce 'the spark that would lead to war' (*scintilla gwerram paritura*).

The solution to this crisis is to be found in the terms of the treaty that was eventually concluded by Sigismund and Władisław on 15 March 1412 at Lublau (Lubló, Lubowla) in Slovakia.⁸² The compromise reached between the two monarchs, whilst confirming Moldavia's position as vassal of Poland,⁸³ placed her at the same time under certain obligations to Hungary. By the application of the feudal duty of *homagium ligium*, which was invoked when establishing the primacy of obligations of fealty assumed by a vassal towards two or more suzerains, the voievode of Moldavia found himself bound by one clause of the treaty to honour the obligation of *auxilium*, or military aid, to Sigismund.⁸⁴ Although the relationship of secondary vassalage of Alexandru of Moldavia to Sigismund was not explicitly mentioned in the treaty, it was implicit in the requirement that Moldavian troops should participate with Sigismund in any Hungarian action against the Turks, albeit solely at the request of the King of Poland.⁸⁵ A second limitation on this obligation of *auxilium* to Sigismund was embodied in the exemption of the voievode of Moldavia from coming to the Hungarian king's aid should he, the voievode, be honouring his obligations towards the King of Poland.⁸⁶ However, should the voievode fail to meet a request from

⁸² The text of the treaty is to be found in *Codex diplomaticus regni Poloniae et magni ducatus Lithuaniae*, ed. by M. Dogiel, 1, Vilnae, 1758, no. ix, pp. 46–48. Dogiel's text is reproduced in E. de Hurmuzaki, *Documente . . .*, 1, part 2, no. cccci, pp. 483–87. Witold adhered to the treaty on 15 April 1412: see *Monumenta aevi historici res gestas Poloniae illustrantia*, VI: *Codex epistolaris Vitoldi magni ducis Lithuaniae (1376–1430)*, ed. by A. Prochaska, Cracow, 1892, p. 13.

⁸³ A position acknowledged by Sigismund: *Ex quo enim Magnificus Alexander pronunc Woiewoda Moldaviensis, ad beneplacita et mandata ipsius domini Vladislai Fratris nostri se dignoscitur obligasse, quam obligationem Nos Sigismundus Rex praelibatus ob amorem purae et sincerae fraternitatis praefati Domini Vladislai Regis, nolentes turbare et impedire: see Codex diplomaticus . . .*, p. 47.

⁸⁴ F. Constantiniu and Ș. Papacostea, op. cit., p. 1134. *Homagium ligium* is the term used to denote the subordination of a vassal's obligations to a secondary suzerain in relation to that same vassal's obligations to his principal suzerain.

⁸⁵ . . . quotiescunque Turcae et infideles, Terram Coronae Hungariae, cum valido exercitu hostiliter invaderent, ac eandem depopulari, et devastare molirentur, aut quomodocunque Nos Sigismundus Praefatus Rex, contra Praefatos Turcas, et infideles, mille lanceas vel plures armaremus, et contra ipsos in expeditionem extra fines Regni nostri Hungariae destinaremus, ex tunc ad nostram intimationem, et significationem, idem Rex Poloniae, frater noster charissimus mandare debebit supradicto Moldvano, ut ipse propria in Persona cum sua tota Potencia Nobis, et nostro exercitui succurrat, et obsequia praestet fideliter, et constanter, salvo, si Moldvanus ipse infirmitate notabili, et gravi ex tunc esset inventus. Quo casu nihilominus potentiam suam cum Rectore exercitus sui idoneo transmittere debebit . . .; see *Codex diplomaticus . . .* p. 47.

⁸⁶ Quo casu nihilominus potentiam suam cum Rectore exercitus sui idoneo transmittere debebit, vel si saltem in servitio memorati Domini Vladislai Regis nostri charissimi, cum sua potentia protunc foret praecoccupatus . . . (ibid.).

Sigismund to provide military support within the terms of the treaty, then the direst of sanctions would apply: the voievode would be unseated and Moldavia partitioned between the two kings along a line of demarcation described in the treaty.⁸⁷ The contour of this demarcation line is clear evidence of the political and economic interests that each king wished to defend in the area: it would give Poland the northern and eastern parts of the principality, with the town of Iași and the port of Maurocastro, and Hungary the western and southern districts, including the town of Bîrlad and the port of Kilia at the mouth of the Danube.⁸⁸ In this way the two kings guaranteed each other an outlet to the Black Sea.⁸⁹

A situation in which the treaty provision for the partition of Moldavia could be implemented by the Polish and Hungarian kings never arose owing to the political agility of Alexandru cel Bun (Alexander the Good) of Moldavia (1400–32). Yet the very conclusion of the treaty underlined the fragility of Moldavia's territorial integrity during her infancy. The threat to Christendom posed later in the fifteenth century by the Ottoman Turks eventually overshadowed Polish and Hungarian rivalry over Moldavia. For a time, the bulwark raised by Stephen the Great (1457–1504), the principality's greatest warrior, against the Moslem invader was sufficiently sound to resist, but Polish pretensions to the principality continued to be affirmed even during his reign. This vulnerability of Moldavia to the territorial ambitions of a neighbouring kingdom or Empire in the ascendant has continued, down to recent times, to be a hallmark of her turbulent history. The idea of partition, sown in the minds of interested rulers in 1412, became reality exactly four hundred years later when the eastern part of the principality was annexed by Alexander I, Tsar of Russia, and rechristened Bessarabia.

⁸⁷ ... qui si de mandato memorati Domini Vladislai Regis, ut praelibatur, in succursum contra Turcas, vel infideles personaliter venire, vel infirmitate praeveniente, mittere suam potentiam recuset, ex tunc Nos ambo, videlicet Sigismundus et Vladislavus Reges, simul debemus Terram Moldaviae, non obstante praedicta obligatione, potenter invadere, et ipsum Woiewodam Moldavum ab eadem remove, et ditioni nostrae subiugare, obtentaque inter nos Reges dividere, et per limites, seu terminos infrapositos distinguere, et celebrari tali modo (ibid.).

⁸⁸ Quod sylvae maiores Bukovina dictae, incipiendo a montibus, seu ab Alpis Regis Hungariae, inter eandem Terram Moldaviae, et Terram Sepenyecensem sitaetae, penes Sereth protendentes se ad aliam Sylvam minorem Bukovina dictam, usque ad fluvium Pruth, debent per medium dividi, seu dimidiari. Et quod forum lassutam in sinistra parte situm manet pro eodem Domino Vladislao Poloniae Rege etc. Forum vero, seu villa Berlam in dextra parte sita maneat nobis Sigismundo Regi, Coronae Regni nostri Hungariae. Transcensio autem fluvio Pruth residuae sylvae, directe procedendo ad campos desertos usque ad mare, pari modo cum eisdem campis desertis per medium dividantur. Ita quod Feiemar, alias Bialogrod cum aequali medietate pro supra dicto Domino Vladislao Rege Poloniae etc. et Kilia cum alia aequali medietate pro Nobis Sigismundo Rege, et Coronae Hungariae, maneant taliter dimidiatae et divisae (ibid.).

⁸⁹ For a brief history of Maurocastro and Kilia → Dennis Deletant, 'Genoese, Tatars and Rumanians at the Mouth of the Danube in the Fourteenth Century' (*The Slavonic and East European Review*, vol. 62, no. 4, 1984, pp. 511–30).